

Alien Brethren

by PyroViper

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Summary: Two soldiers will find that it is not race or species that defines them...but it is truth and trust. And with that knowledge and alliance, they will concur over all obstacles to save a doomed universe of war and Halos.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1: Two Soldiers

"Good to see you Master Chief," a marine said as he snapped to attention and saluted the Spartan. Sergeant Baxter, along with many other marines, were relieved to see the super soldier finish off the rest of the grunts and elites that had them pinned down at Hotel Zanzibar. "What's your status?" Spartan 117 asked. "We've got two wounded, the rest of us are operational. There's enemy contacts up ahead through that hallway but when we heard you were on your way we decided to wait up for you," Baxter answered. "You," Master Chief said referring to Baxter, "will stay here then and watch over your wounded. Everyone else heads out with me." "Understood sir," Baxter said nodding briskly as the Spartan headed out with his battle rifle in hand while the other marines tailed behind with shotguns, SMG's, and a few battle rifles. Sergeant John Baxter watched them head into the dark hallway beyond and readied his Sniper Rifle that he put away. He watched the area diligently while he listened to the human gunfire tear through Covenant opposition beyond. He chuckled as he heard the occasional sound of "WORT WORT WORT!" of cocky Elites or the squeaky voices of various Grunts. Distant noises of phantoms, warthogs, and ghosts could be barely heard on the other side of the hotel and things so far were mildly boring and quiet where Baxter stood. "Ugh, I'm thirsty," moaned a marine whom had taken a series of hits in the leg by a Needler. Baxter looked over to his right and saw a broken down vending machine. He used the butt of his sniper rifle to hammer the vending machine in a blunt way, which caused a few sodas to come out. He threw one to each of the wounded marines and drank one himself. Watching over Hotel Zanzibar, keeping watch with a sniper rifle, and drinking a Cola. "Yep, nothing gets better than

this," Baxter said half relaxed half annoyed.

"The demon and his minions have arrived!" Cried a crimson armored elite to his brethren Elites whom had just stepped out of their pods, as did he. A human, four-wheeled car just came into view over a jump and it splashed through the coastline and headed straight for them. The demon was driving the primitive vehicle while the two humans took offensive measures in the vehicle. Projectiles came barraging the newly arrived elites and it didn't help that the vehicle was rampaging straight for them. The crimson elite, Alei 'Limoto, jumped out of the way just in time as the car came right in his direction. One of his fellow elites wasn't so lucky as he took a hard hitting from the vehicle's mounted weapon. The other elite avenged the dead elite with a heavy barrage of plasma into the side of the human vehicle. It took a great beating and by Alei's guess the demon was taken surprise of this attack and drove as fast as he could away from the pods and into a farther off tunnel. "Look at the coward run," Alei 'Limoto commented to his fellow Elite. "The demon will have much difficulty getting passed the ghosts and sniper Jackal up ahead," growled the other elite pleasantly. "Let us check out that building. I see much human ammunition for us to confiscate up there," Alei 'Limoto said referring to a primitive building off to his right. The two of them headed over to the building and found a primitive escalating tool to reach the top of the building. It was a series of bars leading to an opening to the top of the structure which Alei 'Limoto assumed was used to climb up. "How do you suppose the humans use this to excel upwards?" The other elite questioned. "I suppose they climb up in some sort of barbaric, ape like way," Alei 'Limoto implied. Then there was the noise of footsteps above and then some sort of ping! "DEMON FLAIR!" Alei 'Limoto roared as he leapt out of the way. He leapt quite a distance, enough to keep him safe from the blast, however his fellow elite didn't fancy so well as he heard him yelp out, "HWAAAAAAA!" Alei 'Limoto turned to see a puddle of blue sticky fluid smeared across the walls and all over the elite's body. Alei 'Limoto knelt down to check on his brethren. The elite was shaking with immense pain and seemed to be using his final strength to hand Alei something. It was a Energy Sword and four grenades. "Use it to smite our enemy," the elite said in a soft shaky voice and then he fell silent and motionless. Alei equipped himself with the new weapon, discarding his needler, and put away his grenades. He bowed his head towards the elite in a way of gratitude and said to the dead elite softly, "I shall see you in the great journey brother."

"Everyone's loaded up!" Baxter said as he handed the last injured marine to another marine on a pelican that had lowered near the entrance of Hotel Zanzibar. Sergeant John Baxter hopped on the Pelican himself and stood throughout the whole flight behind the turret. The pelican lifted off above the hotel and passed overhead. "STOP!" Hollered Baxter as they came over a largely Covenant populated spot. Beyond the beach there was a building and a Covenant Sniping Tower. Beyond that there was a large tunnel. In the whole scene he saw dead elites and grunts along with some destroyed ghosts. "Hah, Chief must have been here, but he did a sloppy job," Baxter said. "So why'd you want to stop?" Asked the pilot over his comm. link. "Because I want to make sure that these bastards know who they're dealing with," Baxter said raising his Sniper Rifle and scooping in on the heavily swarmed area, near the Sniping tower. BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! He reloaded his sniper rifle after taking out a sniper Jackal, a grunt, an elite, and another elite that struggled to get

into his ghost.

Alei 'Limoto heard firing in the distance and made haste for vengeance. He turned on his active camouflage and gave his sword a swing, which emitted the powerful energy blade. He climbed up the primitive ladder and saw the marine above was now firing at a swarmed area by the sniping tower. He used some sort of scoped weapon that could shoot in sustained, accurate bursts. It resembled a Carbine in Alei's opinion. He sneaked up behind the human and tapped him on the shoulder. The human turned and Alei 'Limoto quickly sliced off one of the human's hands and it dropped the rifle it carried. The human cried in pain and Alei kicked its gun off the building out of reach. Alei reappeared before the human and looked at it pathetically. It was such a worthless creature but Alei failed to see the reason why the Prophets considered them so much a threat and refused on countless of times to take them as prisoners except on a few occasions. "Will you go quietly?" Alei 'Limoto offered. "You can kiss my ASS!" Hollered the human as he grabbed something from his belt, a demon flair. Alei quickly dove at the human with his sword; killing it off before it could detonate the spherical danger. Blood poured from the human's neck and Alei 'Limoto began to ponder much about the human. Alei was known for finding much interest in the humans but his faith and trust in the Covenant caused him to despise the vile race. Though he did ponder much on what they believed in and how powerful they really were. He also pondered about Heretics. His pondering came to an end as he heard several more echoing shots and saw blurs through the air. He looked above and saw a human drop ship shooting off noisy projectiles and quick blurs at his fellow Covenant brothers afar. Alei 'Limoto growled in disgust at the drop ship and then an answer on how to eliminate the threat came to mind as he saw scattered ammunition on the building he stood on. He recognized a very large, blunt looking weapon next to him that was known as a 'Rocket Launcher' to humans. He recalled many elites, mainly those in vehicles, perishing to the monstrous weapon. He swapped his side weapon (plasma rifle) for the large weapon and aimed it at the flying human craft. He steadied his arm, and pulled the trigger.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Clash Of Fates

WHOOSH! POW! "WHAT THE HELL!" Baxter cried out as he quickly grabbed onto something in the Pelican. He felt the aircraft spin uncontrollably and felt a unpleasant feeling of demise within his stomach.

"WORT, WORT, WORT!" cried out Alei 'Limoto, in victory as his successful rocket launcher hit the cockpit of the drop ship successfully. This caused the ship to go down with a bang. He examined the rocket launcher that he held, "This will come in handy." He used the scoop of the rocket to examine the crash site and saw three humans still alive, two whom exited and carried the large rifles, which resembled a Carbine and the other one whom was reloading an elongated rifle. The two human immediately started shooting Alei and he jumped off the building to attack the vile creatures.

"Stupid Rocket," Baxter grumbled as he tended to his sniper rifle and once he was done reloading and had finished shaking off the impact of

the crash he looked through the scope of his sniper rifle. He saw the marine on the chain gun and another functional marine whom was inside the Pelican both charge at the elite with their battle rifles. Baxter thought this move was rather risky but decided to watch from a far to see the results. The Crimson alien bastard put away his Rocket Launcher and whipped out an Energy Sword. The marines had already gotten the elite's shields down half way and it was still charging at them, as were the marines. John was impressed how confident and brave the elite was to face off between two marines when it's shields were being depleted. As the energy shield of the elite dropped the elite flung itself forward at one marine with his sword, slashing him in the leg. The marine dropped his gun and fell to the ground in pain. The elite grabbed the wounded marine and tossed him at the other sending them both on their backs. Baxter was confused why the Elite didn't just kill them both when he had the chance. Too involved with watching the scene, Baxter's mind wasn't on the Sniper Rifle's trigger. The Elite seemed to speak to the two marines and after they exchanged words the Elite activated and dropped a plasma grenade on one of the marines and simply walked away from them as they both blew up in a blue, fuzzy explosion. Once the marines were sent across the beach seemed to have his attention now on Baxter. Baxter was too shocked to do anything when he saw the Elite look straight at him. He didn't pull the trigger yet, but merely waited. The Elite pulled out and activated another plasma grenade and hurled it into the air and it whizzed by Baxter's head. He quickly jumped for cover as the grenade exploded. He was impressed. An elite had the strength and accuracy to come very near to killing him.

Alei growled in disappointment, seeing his grenade missed. Now he would have to do things the hard way. Alei began to dash for the human and the human merely raised his rifle at Alei. This didn't surprise nor frighten Alei; he was an Elite, one of the best, and one of the bravest. As he got closer to the human within attacking distances he saw the human's finger move toward the trigger of the gun. Alei jumped into the air for a better attacking position so he may beat down the human with his mighty sword. As he came down for the kill he felt a great deal of pain in his shoulder as his recharging energy shield immediately faded away. Then without being able to respond to the fired shot in his shoulder he felt the rifle hit him in the head with a blunt THWACK!

Baxter looked down at the knocked out alien. It was an amazing, powerful creature. It was a shame that no marine had ever taken one of these things as hostage and questioned it. Sergeant John Baxter then began to ponder the possibilities of having such a well-trained and mighty warrior as an ally. He thought that doing this may prove to be impossible but it was worth a try. Baxter confiscated the elite's weapons and said, "Well, now I have to heave you and these guns all the way back to the Energy Turbine Facility at Zanzibar." Then Baxter discarded his secondary weapon (a SMG) and slung the Rocket Launcher as his secondary. He attached the sword to his belt, grabbed the elite by its leg and dragged him across the beach in an excruciating walk back to the Windmill to Zanzibar.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3: Life Debt

Alei 'Limoto's mind cleared up now and he began to recover his

vision. Everything was blurry yet he was thankful he could see. He heard the sound of the wind blowing through the breeze, the tide washing up against the beach, different alien types of machinery at work, and human noises.

He shook his head and discovered his legs were tied together with a restraint, as were his hands behind his back. He felt something hard behind him, a wall. He looked around and saw that there was some sort of entry off to his left to a facility and to his left there was a narrow pathway. He struggled to gain his freedom but his attempts were futile. He then heard the sudden roaring of a human vehicle's motor. It was familiar and it grew louder. Suddenly around the corner a four-wheel human vehicle came spinning around the corner. Alei 'Limoto glared at the vehicle and the humans inside.

"Look what we got here fellas," said a deluded marine whom got out of the driver seat and walked towards Alei crookedly.

"We got ourselves a hog tied red bastard!" Spat the human in the Alei's face.

The two other marine's laughed at the elite as he growled and struggled to slay the filthy aliens.

"Look at him he's trying to get you, Schafer," snickered another human.

"How do you think such a worthless sack of scum got here?" Asked another human.

"Who cares, let's have fun with him," the human named Schafer said.

The humans grabbed the elite and dragged him feet first through the sand on the beach and Alei grunted as he was being dragged and tried to gain back his freedom and dignity. They stopped dragging him and left him in the sand as the two marines went back to the vehicle and one other marine set up a box right next to the Alei.

"Don't flinch, or you might get splattered," warned the human as he slapped him in the back of the head.

Alei would have done anything to acquire four plasma grenades, a fuel rod cannon, and five minutes with the humans to teach them a lesson at that time. Once the third human hopped into the vehicle the motor roared and the driver honked some sort of irritating horn that made Alei wince. Then he heard the human vehicle drive straight at him and he closed his eyes not wanting to witness his own fate.

Then just when Alei thought he would be put out of his misery and prepare for the great journey the vehicle had drove over the box that acted like a ramp and went airborne right over him. It landed in the tide and splashed Alei. He growled and shook himself off as best as he could from being splashed. Then the humans let out an annoying torturous laugh as they drove back onto the beach and then all surrounded him.

"It's scared out of his mind, look at it!" One human said pointing and laughing at Alei.

"Hey let's get practice on our Warthog killing skills!" Schafer suggested.

"How so?"

"We untie him, let him run around and we mess around with him in the hog," Schafer said.

The rest of the humans cheered in glee at the idea and untied the Alei. Once Alei was untied he jumped to his feet and went to strike the closest human but he was knocked to his feet by another marine and they all laughed at him. As Alei 'Limoto got to his feet again they were already in the vehicle known as the 'warthog' and it came charging at Alei. Alei quickly jumped out of the way of the rampaging vehicle, his head covered in sand from diving head first into it.

The warthog turned to face the poor elite and Schafer ordered the human with the mounted turret, "This time try shooting at him a little bit just to rattle him up."

Then the warthog came charging at Alei 'Limoto again and he jumped out of the way, barely making it in time as he felt sharp human projectiles pierce into his back. He roared in pain and heard the cackling of the humans once more. Alei 'Limoto returned to his feet again and then was knocked off his feet by the passenger of the warthog whom shot him with a human rifle. They began to laugh harder in a very deluded way and Alei 'Limoto found himself lying in his own puddle of blood.

He got to his feet again, never giving up. The warthog game rampaging toward him again, this time the large mounted gun on the human vehicle came firing at him before the vehicle passed him, which made it harder to jump out of the way. The warthog hit him hard in the leg and he was thrown into the tide by the vehicle's impact. Alei 'Limoto felt weak now but as he got to his feet he realized that vengeance is what kept him getting back up on his feet. Though he was unarmed he'd have to try something crafty, something the deluded humans wouldn't expect.

The vehicle came rampaging forward at him and as the mounted gun began pelting projectiles at him he leapt into the air and landed on top of the mounted gun. He knocked the human off the turret and then proceeded to scooping the driver out of his seat. With the driver and the gunner off the evil human vehicle he was free to take care of the rest by his own strength. He kicked the passenger out leaving nobody let inside the vehicle and leapt on top of Schafer.

Alei 'Limoto glared into his scared, pathetic eyes and picked him up by the scruff of his uniform and raised him to Alei's eye level.

"You will bow to me human," snarled Alei 'Limoto.

Alei then smashed his skull into Schafer's doing more damage to Schafer then himself. Alei would have proceeded to attacking Schafer some more but he felt a burst of bullets piece into his back. He roared in pain and fell to the ground in immense pain.

Alei didn't know how much more of this he could take. The human's

surrounded him and Schafer took one of the other's humans' guns.

"Say good night you son of aâ€|" but Schafer was cut off by a echoing BANG through the air. The humans and Alei turned to see whom it was. It was Sergeant Baxter, sniper rifle in hand. He had shot his rifle into the air to get their attention.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Baxter scolded.

"We're teaching this piece of sack of crap a lesson," Schafer replied simply.

"He's my hostage Schafer. Don't think I can't have you demoted to private along with your friends," Baxter threatened right in Schafer's face.

"Lighten up Baxter will ya?"

"That's Sergeant John Baxter to you Corporal," he replied with a very grim face.

John examined Schafer's eyes and saw that they were very shaky, glassy, and drunk.

"Have you and your friends been drinking again Corporal?" Baxter asked.

Schafer merely belched in Baxter's face as a reply and in a split second Baxter took Schafer down with the stock of his sniper rifle to Schafer's face, shattering his nose. Blood poured from Schafer's nostrils.

Baxter gave the other marines a quick glance and they hurried off cowardly. Baxter stepped on Schafer's chest to walk over to his hostage elite, Alei 'Limoto. Alei looked up at Baxter wondering what to make of this human. John extended his hand towards the elite. He cocked his head wondering what the human was doing and assumed that Baxter was trying to help him up. Alei welcomed this and he put his four-tingered hand into Baxter's pale five-fingered hand as he helped him up to his feet.

Baxter examined the bullet holes in Alei 'Limoto and knew instantly that they were from Schafer and his posse.

"I apologize for the hostility that one of my fellow marines treated you with," Baxter said.

"You are lucky you already punished him or he would have already been drowned by my hands," Alei 'Limoto replied.

Baxter decided to laugh at the elite's remark to show peace towards him.

"Follow me," Baxter said as they headed toward a large facility near an even larger windmill.

"I am in your debt human," Alei said.

"Excuse me?" Baxter asked confused.

"They surely would have killed me had you not come along. I am grateful. Perhaps you are not like the other filthy humans," Alei 'Limoto replied.

Baxter decided not to take offense against Alei's remark about 'filthy humans' so that everybody was happy. "There are a few pig heads out there I admit," Baxter said.

They had just turned the corner of the windmill when Alei saw many warthogs parked everywhere and many humans looking at him strangely. Alei decided to ignore their staring and murmuring and continued onto another subject, "You are very good with that weapon that you wield."

"What, this?" John asked pulling out his Sniper Rifle.

"Yes. What is it called?"

"It's a SRS9|um|let's just call it a Sniper Rifle," Baxter said, stopping himself from introducing it by it's proper, longer name.

"And what is it that they call you, human?" Alei asked as they entered the facility.

"Baxter|Sergeant John Baxter. Sergeant is just my rank though, John is my first name. What about you?"

"My name is Alei 'Limoto," Alei said proudly.

"That's a|ermâ€|unique name," John said trying to find the right words so that he wouldn't offend the alien.

"Andâ€|Surgeent John Bastard is also a unique name," Alei replied, trying his best to pronounce Baxter's name.

"It's Baxter! Sergeant Baxter. Not bastard, Baxter!" John corrected.

"Baxterâ€|" Alei said to himself, pronouncing it a lot better then before. Once inside Alei looked around amazed at the human facility finding much interest in it's structure. Many marines gave weird, confused glances at the unarmed elite and he felt very out of place.

A question aroused, "Sergeant Baxter, why is it you kept me alive?"

"Two reasons. The main reason is because you seemed like a good ally and I was hoping to convince you somehow to join human forces. The way you slain your enemies was incredible but at the same time you showed mercy to my fellow marines. You seemed like the perfect elite to try and convince to join me," Baxter explained.

"And the other reason?"

Baxter let out a sigh as Alei's curiosity for the other reason arose. "Because few marines have ever captured a elite. I thought if I captured you and you refused to join I'd still have a hefty reward,

no offense to you," Baxter explained. Alei just looked at him.

"So why exactly does the Covenant hate us?" Baxter asked trying to be more formal and social with his new alien friend.

"Because you oppose the Covenant goal," Alei said simply.

"And what is that exactly?"

"The Great Journey," Alei Limoto said with great pride.

"Great Journeyâ€|never heard of it, but how have we been opposing it," Baxter asked.

"The Prophets believe that you humans are too intelligent and too risky for the Covenant and would oppose our beliefs in the Great Journey. Not only that but you have destroyed our sacred ring."

"Sacred ring? You mean Halo?" Baxter asked, "So let me get this straight, you're upset that we blew up your ring even though that ring could destroy multiple galaxies? Don't you know that Halo is a weapon?"

"It is not a weapon," Alei snarled, "It is an artifact built by the Forerunners used so that every member of the Covenant shall achieve peace and glory on the Great Journey."

"You and your Prophets are wrong," Baxter said. Alei took a few steps toward Sergeant Baxter and was now face to face with him and looked at him in a threatening way.

"What do you think you're doing?" Baxter asked. Then before any more could be said a marine came running inside the facility looking frantic, "Sir there's two enemy Phantom on the other side of the coastline wall. They're sending Covenant troops!"

Baxter looked at the other marine and ordered, "Tell everyone to assume defensive positions around this facility."

The marine gave a curt nod and headed off to give the other marines their orders. Baxter looked back at Alei whom was still glaring at him. "I'm going to need your help," Baxter said.

"You want me to help kill off my brothers, even after how you insulted my people and my beliefs?" Alei asked as though Baxter were mad.

"I'm not apologizing for what I said, your so called Great Journey is a lie. I can prove it to you as well," Baxter said.

"How?"

Baxter sighed and retrieved something sitting on a table in a corner that lay with ammunition and broken devices. He held a spherical device that had a large light in the center. The light was damaged and its framework was in bad conditioning.

Immediately Alei recognized what it was, "The oracle!"

"If that's what you call them yes, but we call them monitors. These monitors are said to watch over Halo and supposedly contain much information on your so-called 'sacred ring'. One of our expedition teams found it on a planet called Threshold and brought it back to us. However it's broken and we don't know how to fix it. It'll tell you the truth about Halo," Baxter explained.

"I may know someone who knows how to fix it," Alei said thinking about his Covenant brothers that he missed.

"So once you get it fixed, and you hear what it has to say do you promise to fight along the human cause and ditch your Prophets?" Alei thought about this and nodded. "Good," Baxter said and he handed Alei his energy sword that he had confiscated from the alien, "Now will you help us out with our problem at hand?"

Alei took his energy sword and examined it. "I will do what I can," Alei replied.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Assault on Zanzibar

Baxter had gone left through the facility gate and up a ramp to a sniping position where he found more rounds for his beloved sniper rifle. He scoped in on the opening of the coastline wall and watched for Covenant troops to come.

He heard Elites barking orders in the distance and then POW! Baxter's trigger finger pulled the trigger as if it were primal instance once he saw sights on a grunt coming through the opening. If there were any remorse he felt for killing one type of Covenant species, it'd be grunts. He knew they had potential of being dangerous but at the same time he thought they were cute in a weird sort of way. He made sure his thoughts didn't distract him from his sniping as Elites, Jackals, and Grunts came pouring out of the opening and he shot down one running Jackal with a marvelous headshot.

This attracted attention by one Elite in particular as the rest of the Covenant began opening fire on other Marines they spotted. The elite that spotted him had blue armor and a Covenant Carbine. It used the scope on the gun and began suppressing fire against John. He took one hit in the shoulder as the rest missed. He quickly backed behind cover and lay low avoiding any more shots of fire and reloaded his sniper rifle.

Alei came out from one entrance to the facility and saw two marines boarding a parked warthog, which had a different gun on the back. It looked more powerful yet slower than the other chain gun he saw on the other warthog. The warthog had already contained a driver and a passenger but no other marine was willing or able to take the gunner position for they were taking fire and engaging against the Covenant that proceeded through the windmill or the other route which lead towards the facility.

The driver honked the Warthog's annoying horn many times, trying to get any marine's attention so that they might take the gunner position, however none assumed the position. Alei approached the vehicle and the humans inside gave him a weird look.

"Do you need a backseat driver human?" Alei asked. The passenger looked shocked at what the elite was suggesting but the driver didn't care who it was that entered and said, "Sure, hop in the back."

Alei lifted himself onto the back of the jeep and grabbed hold of the large mounted gun.

"Do you know how to use it?" Asked the driver.

Alei swerved the turret off to his left where he saw Jackals pelting a small group of marines whom were trapped near the windmill. He felt around for something that made the gun work and found a set of buttons on it and pressed them. The gun shook with immense force as it let off a loud BANG! The gun was so powerful it obliterated the Jackals' shields and splattered their blood everywhere.

"Oh yea he's a natural," commented the passenger. The warthog sped off, around a corner, and met the enemy head on where the jeep bounced as it crunched and splattered many Covenant. Alei 'Limoto began firing heavily against his own kind keeping his mind on the human he owed, Baxter, rather disappointing the prophets by using friendly fire against his own.

After a body count of about a dozen or so more Covenant came pouring out and to Alei's surprise a Wraith appeared from the opening in the wall. Many marines fell to suppressive of needlers, plasma rifles, and carbines as the new fleet arrived and large groups of marines were scattered about to the bluish blob of plasma that the Wraith hurled into the air.

Alei immediately began firing at the large alien tank and unfortunately, this got its attention. "INCOMING!" Hollered the passenger as he jumped out of the warthog seeing a large bluish blob of energy come hurtling towards the jeep.

The driver and Alei however weren't so lucky. The warthog did multiple flips through the air and landed on its side with both Alei and the other marine on their backs.

Alei's energy shield was now down and his body ached. He managed to get to his feet and watched as the driver collected a nearby Carbine and hide behind the totaled Warthog. Alei peeked out from the Warthog and saw the Wraith positioning it's large cannon correctly and Alei knew it's intent on making sure no one survived. Alei grabbed the human by the shoulder and ran, dragging the marine as he did, and five seconds after he began sprinting with the human the Warthog did another set of flips and was scattered into pieces from the second mortar fire.

Alei threw the human behind some cover at the corner, which separated the battle from the facility. The passenger that had exited already was now back peddling and firing to their position. Alei 'Limoto examined the human to see if it was all right.

This human was different from the passenger and from Baxter. Its chest armor seemed to be padded more and its eyes were different somehow. Another difference was that the lips of this human were different from the passenger and Baxter. Was there a some sort of sub species in the human race, Alei 'Limoto wondered.

He kept this in the back of his mind and asked, "Are you alright human?"

"My leg is pretty banged up but otherwise I'm still alive. Thanks for saving me. Is there any way of repaying you?" The marine replied.

Alei immediately thought of a way for the human to repay its debts to him and said, "The carbine."

The human willingly handed over the Covenant Carbine to Alei. The Carbine was a favorite of his as a primary weapon when he wasn't using his standard Needler and Plasma Rifle combo. Alei headed off around the corner for a better vantage point on the situation.

Baxter just knocked off three Jackals and an Elite with his sniper rifle when he noticed Alei 'Limoto run off with a Carbine that he took from a marine below his position. His attention immediately shifted over to the Wraith as he heard a frightful sound of mortar firing off.

Knowing some how that it was coming in his direction he jumped off the sniping platform and thankfully for his instinct he had just avoided being obliterated by the giant plasma mortar. He landed next to two Marines, one being the one that gave Alei the Carbine, Corporal Samantha Whelski.

"Nice of you to drop in Sergeant," said the other Marine.

The other Marine was Private Jack Parker. He held firmly in his hands a battle rifle.

"Likewise Parker," Baxter said giving a brief nod to the Private and turned to the Corporal, "Without a weapon, and a injured leg you're in no condition to fight Corporal."

"I would be in worse condition if it weren't for that red elite. What kind of army is this anyway? I thought we were made up of humans only," Whelski replied.

"Yea well, times change and I figure if we have an ally who was once our enemy it could give us a number of possibilities and advantages. Now enough talking. Parker, get Whelski to the facility and tend to her wound, I've got to find another sniping position."

Alei shot off his Carbine with precision and power as he gathered a body count of one elite, four grunts, and seven Jackals. He sidestepped to his left as he shot it off, hardly taking any response fire since the Covenant seemed to be more interested in Marine's that were on higher ground near the Windmill and those trying to sneak their way past the corner.

Alei found a ramp leading up to a post and decided it'd be a good place to hang out for a while. Once Alei arrived at the post he watched the battle go on as numbers of Covenant fell to the Marine's heavy fire yet Marines took casualties as well from the mighty Wraith or impressive Covenant firepower.

A group of four Marines swarmed near the windmill where they gave a huddle of Jackals amazing suppressive fire but their shots were futile because of the Jackals' shields. Alei decided to help out as he tossed a plasma grenade down at the flock of Jackals. It landed on one's head and it scurried around in a panicky way. Once it detonated it killed off most of the other Jackals near by it, injuring the rest, which gave the Marines the opportunity to finish off the rest of them.

Alei then raised his Carbine and scoped the battlefield for only easy targets, which it only took one shot to finish them so that his position wouldn't be jeopardized. His plan succeeded for some time until he heard Covenant forces succeeding near his position off to his left. He activated his active camo and waited silently and he saw one white elite, two Red elites, three blue elites, and a vast number of Grunts proceed to his post. He flattened himself against a wall so he wouldn't be noticed and noticed one grunt, a green one, carry a large, spherical object. From Alei's judgment it was a bomb.

He let the forces pass barely until he threw a grenade and opened fire, giving away his position. The grenade landed on the white elite and it hollered in anguish as it exploded along with the others. Alei made it out in time before the grenade consumed the whole post in a blue blast of energy.

POW! POW! Baxter had made haste to get on top of the Windmill where he was sniping ground forces on a bridge that connected the windmill to another post. He had taken out an Elite and a Jackal with his sniper rifle and he reloaded. He had heard the sound of a grenade exploding below.

After reloading he looked downward to see what it was and saw Alei standing on a ledge that connected to the coastline wall.

"ALEI!" Baxter hollered as the crimson Elite looked upward to find his sniping friend, "What's all the commotion down there?" Baxter asked.

"I vanquished a squad that came by my position. A Grunt was holding something resembling a bomb," Alei reported.

"A bomb?" Baxter asked surprised.

A mortar flew several meters over John's head and he took cover and threw a Frag down at the Wraith hoping it'd keep it off his back for the moment.

"More forces are coming John," Alei hollered to him, "Let me take care of the Wraith, you make sure the bomb doesn't exceed any further."

"ALRIGHT!" Baxter hollered as he glimpsed to see if the Wraith had lost interest of him yet. It was now concentrating on Marines that attempted to ambush the Wraith around the corner and its front turrets went to work to take out the small threats.

Alei was correct about more troops coming as they walked up a rubble like staircase. Baxter took care to sniping off as many as he could until he realized, he was out of Sniper Rifle rounds. The Covenant group proceeded to where the bomb left off and John wouldn't dare let

them precede with it any further. He pulled out his SMG and jumped down to the Covenant's position near the post. He lobbed a Frag grenade at the enemy taking out half of the troops and fired off his SMG.

This took the aliens by surprise and made them run rather then fight as if they had more important things to do then waste their time with one human. John proceeded cautiously and saw two Elites covering three Grunts' back and two Jackals and one Elite covering the Grunts' fronts. They were all headed toward the facility and were making good time as they did so. John picked up a plasma pistol near a dead grunt and wielded it in his left hand.

Something fell on the back of an Elite's ghost that had just emerged from the opening in the wall. The Elite riding the speedy vehicle turned his head to see what it was and saw a angry, crimson Elite clung to the back of the vehicle.

The Elite sped forward desperately as if a final attempt to get Alei 'Limoto off but this failed as the crimson Elite kicked the other Elite out of the vehicle. The Elite that was driving the ghost immediately grabbed his Plasma Rifle and roared in anger at Alei as it shot furiously at him.

The plasma managed to take out half of Alei's shield but at that point Alei had already whipped out his energy sword and slain the other Elite. Alei made haste to quickly commandeer the abandoned Ghost and spun it around now facing the goliath, Covenant tank.

The Wraith fired a blue mortar into the air at Alei as Alei sped straight for the Wraith. The mortar hit the ground with a loud WHAM missing the Ghost completely thanks to the Ghost's boosting system. Alei continued his daring boost straight toward the Wraith till the two vehicles were a matter of feet away from each other. Alei leaned back causing the Ghost to do what looked like a wheelie and it skimmed over the Wraith. He jumped off the Ghost as it skimmed over and managed to get a grasp on the tank.

He found the opening to the Wraith and used his bare hands to beat off the top that protected the driver. Once it shattered by the crimson Elite's might he chucked one of his plasma grenades into the driver seat and jumped off the Wraith just as it detonated.

Alei proceeded forward through the opening of the coastline wall. There he saw two Phantom hovering above the tide, one sending down more troops. Alei Limoto had a plan now to deceive the others into thinking it was a human that had caused so many kills and destroyed the Wraith. Alei faked a concern look on his face as he met a White Elite, the leader of the new crew coming down.

"What's the status?" The leader asked Alei.

"They've been slaughtered by the humans, even the Wraith. My group managed to make it past the windmill and plant the bomb. They told me to go back and tell you that they may not come back alive once they planted the bomb," Alei lied, the best to his abilities.

"And the Oracle that was seek? Did they find it?" Asked the leader.

"I did see it but the Oracle was already destroyed by the vile humans," Alei lied again this time emphasizing much disgust in his voice.

"The Oracle was a main priority," the leader snarled.

"Not all is a loss," Alei reassured, "The troops inside the human base are planting the bomb as we speak. I suggest leave, but leave me a Phantom, I must speak with the pilot."

The leader Elite decided to place his trust in all of what Alei said and obeyed his request. The rest of the troops went back to their phantom while Alei went up another Phantom's lift. He felt himself being lifted off the sandy ground and being thrown upward into the Phantom by its gravity lift. Alei whipped out his sword silently hoping to take the pilot by surprise if needed so that he may steal the Phantom. He planned on taking control of the Phantom for Baxter and his own purpose.

Once he reached the cockpit of the Phantom he saw a large, hairy Brute at the controls. The Brute turned to see who was behind him and Alei paused shocked to see whom it was.

"Betronus," Alei muttered.

"LOOK! ENEMY HERE!" Squealed a grunt.

The leader of the troop, a red elite, saw in a corner were two humans, both unarmed.

"Hands up humans!" The red elite demanded as he and his two other brethren, blue Elites raised their weapons at the humans. The humans obeyed not wanting to be killed and raised their hands above their hands.

The red Elite nodded towards the Grunt with the bomb that it was time to set up the bomb. It scurried to the center of the facility and placed the bomb in a set position and began arming it. The Jackals and Elites scavenged around the facility while the Grunt was arming the bomb when a grunt said, "Me find oracle!"

The red Elite immediately turned to the grunt who spoke and saw the Grunt attempt to carry the monitor yet it was too big for him but the red Elite lifted it with his four fingers and examined it with no problem.

"The Holy Oracle that the vile humans stole from us," muttered the red Elite.

The Jackals lowered and cocked their heads at the Oracle. "Leader the Oracle does not speak nor does it light up. Perhaps it is broken," growled a blue Elite.

"It appears so but still," the red Elite said admiring the spherical, 'holy' object, "Once it is repaired it will guarantee me a reward from the Prophets."

Then his admiring came to an abrupt end as he felt something burning splash against his back, which took out his energy shield and was followed by a series of bullets puncturing his skin until he fell to

his demise.

"HE GOT ELITE!" A grunt squealed as the grunts ran around cowardly except for the one arming the bomb.

Sergeant Baxter discarded the plasma pistol and threw his last two Frag grenades. One landed right behind the Grunt arming the bomb, the other landed near a patch of Jackals and Elites. Both exploded causing leaving only one elite and one grunt standing. He bashed the Elite's skull with a great force, using his SMG, and took out the Grunt by knocking him bluntly in the back, with his SMG as well.

He walked over to see if Parker and Whelski were all right, both were unharmed. Everything was quiet until the sound of a Phantom closed in and Baxter immediately got ready. He placed the bomb on the table full of ammunition and other junk, retrieved some rounds for his Sniper Rifle and went outside, Sniper Rifle fully loaded, for his enemies.

Surprisingly only a familiar, crimson Elite came down the gravity lift to greet him. "Mind pointing that somewhere else Sergeant?" Alei asked.

Baxter pointed his gun elsewhere and greeted Alei with a smile. "I'm assuming you took care of the situation then?" Baxter asked.

"I cleared out the rest of the troops," Alei said proudly, "How about the bomb?"

"Why don't you see for yourself?" Baxter suggested nodding over to the table that held the bomb and the other junk. "Good, then we'll be on our way then," Alei said.

Baxter nodded and said, "Wait up I need to get something."

Alei waited in the Phantom while Baxter retrieved the monitor. "You think you guys can manage the place from here?" Baxter asked the Corporal and the Private. "We can manage. What should we tell everyone else when we find them?" Parker asked.

"Tell them highest in command is in charge because I'm gone," Baxter said with a smile as he went up the gravity lift wondering if he'd ever see Zanzibar or Earth again. Once inside the Phantom he felt weird standing in such an awkward alien drop ship.

"I see you've brought the Oracle," Alei said.

"Wouldn't leave without it. It's the only thing that'll convince you to join us humans," Baxter said.

"What? I hear a vile creature on my vessel!" Roared someone, or something in the cockpit of the Phantom. Out came a large, hairy Brute from the cockpit, its eyes glaring at the human.

"You let this sack of scum on _my _ship!" The brute roared at Alei.

"Easy Betronus he's a friend as are you," Alei said stepping in between Baxter and the Brute named Betronus so no blood was shed, "I told you that what we would be doing may be against the

Covenant."

"You never said anything about a filthy, smelly human," growled Betronus. "You're not so fresh smelling yourself you big ape," Baxter countered.

"WHO ARE YOU CALLING AN APE!" Roared Betronus. Alei now pulled out his sword incase anything drastic was done.

"ENOUGH!" He roared, "You both will tolerate each other and will work together as a team." Betronus gave a displeasing grunt as he headed back to the cockpit.

"Ignore Betronus' occasional rudeness. At times he may be discourteous but he is a good fighter and pilot nonetheless," Alei said.

"Whatever," Baxter said examining his Sniper Rifle.

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5: Rallying up the gang

Once the Phantom had docked inside of the Covenant ship, containing the Prophet of Regret, they waited out ride through slip space. Alei, Betronus, and Sergeant Baxter were still on board the Phantom figuring out their next plan of action.

"You found the Oracle, yet it is broken," growled Betronus whom looked at the motionless monitor that lay on the Phantom's deck.

"John says they found him that way. Supposedly his fellow 'marines' found it on Threshold," Alei explained.

"No doubt they found it on Threshold from the Heretics," snarled the Brute.

"There are Heretics on Threshold?" Alei asked finding this a bit shocking.

"Yes. There is a small camp there known as Burial Mounds. It was reported they had an oracle so we sent a team to go in, wipe out the camp, and steal the oracle," Betronus said.

"Whoa back up," Baxter said confused, "What are Heretics?"

"Those who oppose the Great Journey and the Prophets," Alei explained.

"And we may soon be classified as one too since you say that our mission may be against the Covenant," Betronus added.

"I must know the truth. I owe Baxter my life for saving me from his savage race and he asks that I see the truth; the oracle is the only way," Alei said.

"And what truth do you expect to find in something that's broken?" Questioned Betronus.

"Kaskut, he knows how to fix things," Alei suggested.

"Kaskut? That pipsqueak? Bah! He was part of the troop that went to Burial Mounds. They never made it back but I assume the Heretics are taking him and any other coward like Covenant hostage," Betronus said.

"Then we'll have to confirm he's alive and have him fix the Oracle for us," Alei said.

"Why don't we just have someone more convenient fix it instead of going to Threshold and have some sort of conflict with these heretics," Baxter suggested.

"No other Covenant with mechanical skills can be trusted but Kaskut. Besides he's an essential Grunt and I don't want him to be left behind with a bunch of Heretics," Alei replied, "Was there anyone else on the mission that I know of?"

"Lib the Jackal, no one else you know," the Brute replied.

"Where do you suppose Ralna Tebo and Kalno Tebo are?" Alei asked.

"The Hunters? Guarding Regret I assume," Betronus said.

"Can I trust you to safely take Baxter to Threshold and bring him back to me in one piece?" Alei questioned.

"WHAT!" Baxter cried out as if Alei was nuts.

"Take the human to Threshold? He could be torn apart by the Heretics," Betronus snorted.

"By himself maybe, that's why I want you to help him. Together you both stand a great chance of surviving and infiltrating the Heretic camp on Threshold," Alei replied.

"Why can't you come along?" Sergeant Baxter asked.

"I have obligations with two other friends of mine," Alei said.

"The Hunters aren't worth your time Alei! What would you need them for anyway?" The Brute asked.

"Extra firepower. If what Baxter says is true then we'll have two Hunters on our team, a very nice advantage. Once you complete your mission on Threshold meet me near the Prophet of Regret so that we may form up," Alei said and with the understanding of the full mission now he went down the gravity lift of the Phantom leaving Betronus and Baxter in the Phantom.

"Looks like we have to work together now," Betronus snorted as he went back to the cockpit.

"Fun," Baxter replied sarcastically.

Alei walked through the large Covenant ship wondering where Regret was so that he may find his Hunter friends. He came across a gold

Elite as he ventured through the ship. "Do you know where the Prophet of Regret is?" Alei asked.

"He and his guards are near the ship's main gravity lift. They're landing on another Halo so that he may present his sermon," said the gold Elite. Once Alei heard this his determination to find the Hunters grew and he started sprinting towards the gravity lift.

After passing through many rooms and sections through the ship he finally came to the Gravity lift where countless numbers of Covenant glided downward to a structure surrounded by water. He caught a glimpse of a Hunter's head as it went down the gravity lift. He guessed it was Ralna's or Kalno's.

He approached the gravity lift after a platoon of Grunts and Jackals had went down the lift. He descended downward to the structure and saw the Covenant that descended split up. The higher ranked Covenant went inside the structure while the lower ranked, less important Covenant went over the waters by means of a Forerunner tram.

He noticed Phantoms taking off from the ship as well as a faster way of sending lower ranked Covenant over the waters. He ignored those going over water and entered the structure hoping to find his large Covenant friends.

Meanwhileâ€¦

"Sergeant Bastard we are clâ€¦"

"MY NAME IS BAXTER!" Hollered Sergeant John Baxter as he entered the cockpit of the Phantom.

"As I was saying," Betronus snarled, "We are closing in on the Heretic camp. Prepare for drop."

A few minutes passed by when the Phantom came to a halt. Baxter guessed they were at the destination. Betronus came out from the cockpit, "We're at a safe location, southwest of the Heretic command base. I have the Phantom on auto-hover right now so we'll both go."

Baxter nodded and watched the Brute grab for his plasma rifle and different weapon Baxter never saw before. The other weapon looked as if it were a heavy cannon and melee tool in one. It was too awkward looking to be a rifle of any sort and it had a strange muzzle eliminating the possibilities of a plasma weapon.

Baxter also noticed the plasma rifle was red instead of the usual blue ones that he saw. "What are you staring at?" Betronus growled.

Baxter shook his head, "Nothing."

"Then let's get going," the Brute barked, "You're keeping us up!" Baxter gave the Brute a quick glare as he went down the gravity lift, Betronus following behind.

Baxter looked around his horizons, it was a very apocalyptic looking place and he could hardly believe anyone would be located on such a

deserted looking area. Sand and debris filled the area and the only sound to be heard was the eerie whispers of the wind.

"Since I don't know much about who these damn Heretics are or what this place is we're going to be doing things as quietly and cautiously as possible," Baxter said.

"Bah! I'll do things how I want to," Betronus argued. The Brute headed down a canyon like slope while Baxter shrugged at Betronus' ignorance and went up a slope to his left.

Beyond the slope he could see a pile of wreckage that looked like a tunnel or giant rib cage. Inside this 'giant rib cage' was a series of elites on patrol but they wore armor that Baxter had never seen before. The armor was orange and red and had many other differences between the regular Covenant armor. He assumed this is what Heretic's looked like and took action against his discovered foes. He leveled his sniper rifle, scoped in on one and pulled the trigger.

Alei entered the structure where he saw many blue elites gathered and chattering amongst each other while Grunts and Jackals bickered and playfully fought each other. Ahead was a large door leading to the room where Regret was going to make his sermon no doubt.

He approached the doors when a blue elite behind him called out, "Where do you think you're going?"

Alei turned to look at the elite and simply said, "Inside."

"Red elite no able to go through doors," a Grunt squealed.

"Who's going to stop me?"

"The honor guards you fool!" Another blue elite shouted.

"I must go inside," Alei replied and he approached the doors. They opened before him and inside he found two honor guards standing by the doorway.

"HALT! You are not worthy enough to enter the holy one's altar," a honor guard growled.

"I'm only here to find two Hunters. I must speak with them," Alei replied calmly.

"Ralko Tebo Laku and Kalno Tebo Jamu are currently on duty to guard the holy one. You are not authorized to enter. Leave before we must take actions," the other honor guard replied. Both took out their energy swords ready for the lower ranked Elite.

Alei took out his Carbine said, "I will kill you two if you do not let me through peacefully."

"We shall see who will die," the honor guard replied as they both engaged on Alei.

As they both approached him, Alei activated his active camo, disappearing from the two Elites' sights. The pair of honor guards looked around cautiously for the Elite. "Where'd he go?" Questioned one honor guard and just as he finished speaking he felt something

blunt hit him in the back of the head.

Alei reappeared behind the one Elite with his Carbine. The other honor guard immediately swung at Alei whom had just ducked in time. Alei pulled out his own Energy Sword and the two began to spar with their glowing blades.

After a moment's of sparring Alei decided to end the battle quickly by throwing a plasma grenade on the honor guard's sword. The honor guard threw his energy sword away just before it blew up.

Alei now had his sword against the honor guard's throat and asked, "Do I have clearance now?" The honor guard looked into Alei's persistent eyes in fear. A red Elite, defeating a honor guard, how? The honor guard was confused from by his defeat and wondered who this Elite really was.

He ignored all the questions in his mind and recalled his duty, to keep guard. What would the Prophet of Regret do if this Red Elite had gotten by? He couldn't let him pass, but his own life was at risk. The honor guard came to a conclusion to let Elite pass as he nodded. He proceeded through the large room.

"How could we just let him pass?" Snarled the other Elite whom was rubbing the back of his head in pain. "He won't be ignored for long. We shall see to his death in due time," the other honor guard said picking up his Energy Sword again and standing guard.

SHOOMF SHOOMF SHOOMF! POW POW POW POW! Baxter cringed as he heard the sounds of grenades being lobbed out of Betronus' grenade launcher and making contact with the enemy.

Betronus had gathered a hefty body count with his grenade launcher weapon but Baxter thought it was inefficient and very noisy. While he was bent on pegging off the Heretics quietly, Betronus was making a ruckus somewhere off to his right in the canyon like path. BAM! BAM! BAM!

The sound of his own Sniper Rifle going off was relaxing to him. The sudden familiar kick back of the rifle hitting his shoulder and blood spurting from his enemies' head felt strangely pleasing to him. He admitted that Betronus did gather a bigger body count then him but Baxter felt his style of being more silent and taking out higher priorities with his scoped weapon was more efficient.

He realized however the enemy was catching on to his position. He had moved behind one of the 'ribs' of the large rib cage that he had picked as his sniping spot. A squad of Heretics (in front were Grunts while Elites covered their backs) came rushing towards his position. He finished off the last round inside his rifle, knocking off an Elite.

He switched weapons quickly to his SMG sidearm not wanting to take any risks of being caught off guard while reloading. Before firing off his small yet efficient gun he lobbed a grenade in the center of the squad. Some Elite and Grunts jumped aside in hindsight of the grenade, while the others were sent to their demise by the shrapnel.

With a fraction of the squad dead, he took out those whom got out of

the way with a stream of fire from his SMG. He had taken a few Needles from a grunt in his leg but shook it off and proceeded on.

Defensive troops were sent to guard the perimeter of the base where turrets were already planted and Heretics ready for the enemy. He quickly picked up a nearby Needler from a dead Grunt nearby and started reducing the Heretic reinforcements. Grunts squealed and Elites cried out as they felt the bombarding of bullets from his SMG and the immense, irritating pain of his dual wielded Needler.

Now with a body count of about five or so he began taking heavy fire from a Grunt whom had a stationed Plasma Cannon in a window by the base. Baxter took evasive maneuvers and ran towards a large pillar like object. He hid behind the pillar and discarded the Needler.

As he went to reach for his Sniper Rifle he heard the battle cry of a nearby Elite whom was firing at him from his left. Before Baxter could respond to the fire and use his trusty Sniper Rifle the Elite was suddenly mauled by a brown, hairy blur.

"I could have handled him by myself," Baxter said confidently to Betronus.

"Don't get cocky human," Betronus said taking out a Red Plasma Rifle. The Brute joined Baxter against the pillar as they heard the irritating sound of a plasma cannon firing. Baxter loaded his Sniper Rifle and the Brute spoke, "Do you think you can take care of the turret by yourself?"

Baxter glimpsed around the pillar at the turret, raised his rifle, set the sights on the Grunt's head and said, "Oh yea. I got it."

Alei 'Limoto quietly walked through the 'altar' near the right wall on the second floor. He watched the level below him, looking for his large blue friends. He saw occasional high ranked Grunts, Honor Guards, the holy Prophet of Regret and his heart rose as he saw his Hunter friends.

Ralna Tebo Laku and Kalno Tebo Jamu. Alei could somehow always tell the two of them apart from the other hunters. There was something about the two of them that made them different. Perhaps it was their sluggish like stance or childish like actions. Ralna and Kalno were more pleasant Hunters to be around since they were always playfully fighting with each other and obeyed orders without hesitating. As of now they both looked very bored standing guard for Regret.

Alei jumped down to the ground floor and hid near a corner so that the Prophet would not see him. Ironically it was the Prophet that Alei feared more then the honor guards and the Hunters. When Alei thought about it all the Covenant races were pawns of the Prophets' galactic game of chess. If Regret spotted him, intruding on his sermon, he feared what consequences there would be.

He made sure he hid himself from the Prophet's sight by barely visible to the Hunters. "Psssst! PSSSST!" Alei tried desperately to get the Hunters' attention but they apparently were zoning out and unable to hear Alei. Alei sighed and desperately thought of different ways how he'd get their attention.

POW! POW! Baxter had just shot off two more rounds of his Sniper Rifle eliminating one Grunt with a Fuel Rod Cannon and an Elite. Baxter and Betronus were vigorously at work trying to reduce the Heretic reinforcements and their success was showing.

Fewer Heretics came out from the base they were surrounding and their opposition was growing weaker.

Baxter put away his Sniper again and equipped himself with his sidearm. "Time to ambush while they're weak!" Baxter said and the two of them went charging at the base firing off their weapons.

The two had worked well together and developed a nice strategy. Betronus fired sustained bursts at Elites' shields while Baxter finished them off with his SMG and occasionally tore through the small amounts of Grunt's that hopelessly attacked them. This strategy proved to be very effective as they were able to proceed further and their enemies fell faster.

They had reached an entrance to the base and neither of them had taken too many hits. Two ramps led to the main part of the base but Heretic opposition heavily guarded both entrances. Both of them tossed a grenade at the barricade of Heretics wiping them out swiftly. The two of them tore through the rest of the Heretics easily and proceeded up the ramps. Once they were up the ramp and in the main area of the base they were surprised to see all the remaining Heretics surrender and drop their weapons.

"BAH! Such an easy opponent! Let us show no mercy!" Betronus said pulling out his grenade launcher and got ready to use the blade part of it against the surrendering Heretics.

"WAIT!" Baxter exclaimed, "They're useful to us right now and there's no need for killing them."

"The only good Heretic is a dead one!" Betronus argued.

"They're staying alive," Baxter said, his Sniper Rifle out and pointed at Betronus, "And that's final." Betronus snarled and cursed under his breath. "Where are your prisoners?" Baxter asked the unarmed Heretics.

"Follow," a Heretic Elite said as he lead Betronus and Baxter to a tunnel connected to the base. Sure enough inside the tunnel were two unarmed, normal looking Covenant. One was a short, orange Grunt that Baxter immediately took a liking too as he found it's cute figure and innocent cowering very likeable. The other was an astute, shady looking Jackal whom Betronus seemed to know already.

"You're hear! It's about time," the Jackal hissed to the Brute.

"We be rescued?" Squeaked the Grunt in a confused by the situation.

"Are you Kaskut?" Baxter asked the petite Grunt.

"The one and only," the Grunt named Kaskut said happily.

"Good, you're needed."

"Heretics are setting us free? What's the catch?"

"A friend of yours, Alei 'Limoto, needs your help fixing something," Baxter replied.

"Alei, sent a human to rescue me. What joy!" Kuskut squealed.

"What about me?" Snarled the Jackal.

"What's your name?" Baxter asked.

"His name's lib," Betronus said.

"You know him?"

"Of course. Lib and Alei always rode in my Phantoms and occasionally I fought with them. Lib's one of the cleverest Jackals I ever met. He's essential and Alei would want him as well as Kaskut."

Baxter took a moment to examine the Jackal and stared into its large keen pink eyes sensing lots of talent but also some distrust in the creature. Lib may indeed be very essential to the team but Baxter couldn't shake this hunch that the Jackal may be more twisted and sinister than he appeared.

Baxter reminded himself that Betronus did say Alei would appreciate Lib on the team so he shrugged and the four of them headed back to the Phantom, eager to meet Alei and whoever he was trying to gather.

Some hours later

"I shall light this holy ring, release it's cleansing flame, and burn a path into the divine beyond!" Exclaimed Regret.

Alei noticed the Prophet was really getting into his sermon and was acting very dramatic. Perhaps this could give Alei a chance to sneak by the Prophet and give himself the chance to talk to his Hunter friends.

Alei crouched and quickly ran up to the giant like Hunters, using as much stealth as possible. Kalno cocked his head at Alei and made a weird noise of confusion.

"Silence Kalno," Alei whispered, "It's me, Alei, Alei 'Limoto!"

Kalno gave a quiet chuckle of joy as if he was glad to see the crimson Elite. Ralna cocked his head finally realizing who Kalno was talking to and let out a cry of excitement. Kalno quickly prodded his bond brother with his giant shield as if telling him to be quiet.

Both attentively waited for Alei to speak. "I require both of your assistance," Alei said.

Kalno let out a soft protesting gurgle and motioned to the Prophet of Regret who was very overzealous as he continued with his sermon.

"I know you are serving the holy Prophet but you must hear me out my friends, this conflict may be more important than the Prophets," Alei replied. Ralna gave an odd noise resembling a sort of gasp. "I know what I say may seem odd at first but you must trust me. I'm in debt to another and we have found the oracle! The one I'm in debt to says the oracle has truths about Halo that the Prophets do not know. I'm asking you to accompany me because you are two of my most trusted friends besides Kaskut. We have all been through equal hardships together for better and for worse so I ask that you accompany me on my journeys."

Alei hoped desperately that his words went to heart for the two Hunters. The response took a while for the Hunters to think about but in the end both nodded. "Thank you my friends. Now, we must leave," Alei said.

The Hunters left as quickly and quietly as possible and Alei made sure to keep himself in front of one of the Hunters behind him so that the Prophet of Regret wouldn't spot him. They left the altar without the Prophet noticing their departure and boarded a familiar Phantom that waited for them outside, however, the Phantom that contained the three Covenant wouldn't be getting off so easily.

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6: Remorseful Incentive

"How's it coming with the light bulb?" John asked the hard-working Grunt who was trying his best to repair the oracle.

"Almost ready!" Squeaked the Grunt excitedly. The Phantom that was carrying the six Covenant and Baxter was now hovering over the ruins of Halo that were located nearby the Forerunner tram. Alei had told him to keep a steady speed around the area since he did not know what their next destination would be.

"The sooner the better Kaskut but take your time. The oracle is vital and if it should malfunction then all my planning and gathering will have been pointless," Alei said.

Alei 'Limoto looked around and saw diversity among the contents of the Phantom: two loyal and very powerful Hunters, a crafty Jackal, an essential and ferocious Brute, a reliable and handy Grunt, and a brave, deadeye human.

He was glad that he had Baxter on his team and he remembered it really wasn't his team any more, it was John's. John had saved his life from the other Marines and had spared him. He hoped one day he would do John a favor or save his life so that they were equal. He began to wonder what it'd be like, in his past journeys if Baxter were part of his squad.

Alei recalled the many battles and expeditions he had went on when Kaskut, Betronus, Lib, Ralna, and Kalno accompanied him. Betronus was the pilot and occasionally fought by Alei's side, Lib was the scout and devious one of the group, Ralna and Kalno were the main heavy fire of the group, and Kaskut was the mechanic and Alei's sidekick.

He remembered how Betronus would always berserk when the humans were pelting Lib or himself with heavy fire. Betronus had always had a friendly rivalry against Alei where they both competed to see who got the most kills and who saved whose life the most. Lib and Betronus however were more than just acquaintances.

From Alei 'Limoto's memory Lib was once surrounded by two Warthogs with nobody else with him to fend off the humans. Right when Lib had lost faith Betronus arrived with a Phantom from nowhere and single handedly defeated all the opposing human vehicles with the barrage of plasma fire from the Phantom's turrets. From that day forwards Lib was forever in debt to Betronus and the two of them were the best buddies. This reminded Alei of his debt to Baxter.

Alei kept the memories flowing through his mind as he recalled the first day he met Kaskut. His armor wasn't red back then and Kaskut had just joined the Covenant. He recalled Kaskut being a nervous breakdown when he first met him since he'd never been in battle before. Surprisingly however Kaskut had been the Grunt in his squad with the most kills. Alei was impressed with Kaskut from that day forward and the two of them had been good buddies ever since.

Then he recalled first meeting Ralna and Kalno. It was Alei's first mission when he had inherited his red armor. Ralna and Kalno were recruited to his team (which already consisted of Betronus, Lib, and Kaskut). The two of them had a disgraceful history as they served higher ranking Elites before but failed them. As punishment the two Hunters were recruited to Alei's squad and with Alei's leadership the Hunters were more promising than ever. Alei racked his memory trying to recall when the Covenant had been split up and sent on various different missions. It was some time shortly before Alei was sent on a mission to Earth.

Alei treasured the memories he had with his squad and then he recalled a few missions before he met any of his current team members, when he was a blue elite. He remembered one of his missions when he was quite young; his entire squad was his family, literally. It consisted of his father and his brothers. Alei had enjoyed being part of the squad and enjoyed the missions they went on but as his memory recalled more details of that mission he quickly shook his head not wanting to witness in his mind what had happened again.

"All done!" Kaskut cheered apparently having completed his work on the oracle. Everyone was so excited at Kaskut's accomplishment that even Betronus had come out of the cockpit to witness it himself as he put the Phantom on autopilot.

Everyone watched it in silence then Lib spoke, "Are you sure you fixed it?"

"Why didn't we just find an Engineer and have him fix it?" Betronus asked glaring at Alei.

"We could not have trusted an Engineer with the oracle. They would have notified the Prophets," Alei argued.

"Me fix, ME FIX!" Shouted Kaskut and he gave the oracle a good kick with his odd shaped foot. Kaskut yelped in pain and he began swearing in his native tongue, grabbing his foot while the oracle's center

light began to flicker on and off and slowly began to hover. Everyone watched in awe as the spherical artifact began hover and its light slowly turned green. By judging the way it moved and acted Baxter figured it was broken or out of use for a long time.

Then a cheerful and somewhat charming voice emitted from it, "Greetings, I am 16807 Remorseful Incentive. I am!"

Betronus had grown eager to hear what truths the oracle had to speak and interrupted it, "You are the oracle and you will do as we say and answer our questions. Got it?"

"Just let the thing talk, fuzz ball," retorted John who gave Betronus a nasty glare.

"Ah! A reclaimer! How pleasant! I have long waited for your return. Thank you for repairing me," the sphere said, happy to see Baxter.

"Whoa buddy, I didn't fix you and what's a reclaimer?" Baxter replied.

"I fixed you holy oracle!" Kaskut said proudly.

"None of this is important! Can we please get on with the questioning?" Lib growled.

"I grow impatient, 'Limoto!" Betronus snarled.

"Then keep quiet and I shall ask," Alei said growing agitated by the impatience and bickering on the Phantom, "Holy Oracle, we have repaired you and activated you in hopes of finding a truth that we all seek."

"You may then ask. I am entitled to answer any and all of your questions," Remorseful Incentive chimed.

"We seek the truth about Halo and the Great Journey. What can you tell us?"

"Well, my data banks contain nothing pertaining to what you call 'the Great Journey' but I have what you seek about the rings. The rings built by the Forerunners were used to contain an outbreak of a parasite known as the flood. Should protocol for containing the parasite be ignored and an outbreak occur a Reclaimer is issued to go to Halo's Library and recover a key."

Ralna roared in excitement as if recalling something the oracle had said. "Yes Ralna, he means the Sacred Icon," Alei replied.

"The icon? Haven't the Prophets spoken of it before?" Betronus asked.

"Yes, it appears to be the key to the Great Journey," Alei replied.

"This Great Journey you speak of has no relevance to the key. Once the key is used to activate the rings the Flood will be rendered helpless to the ring's power," 16807 Remorseful Incentive continued.

John recognized this part. He had heard the story from another marine whom asked the Master Chief about his mission on Halo. To clarify things for the other Covenant on board he asked, "And how does the ring render the Flood helpless exactly?"

"Surely you already know the cause and effect of Halo reclaimer," 16807 Remorseful Incentive said nervously.

"I know plenty well what it does. Why don't you enlighten them?" Baxter replied with a smirk on his face as he nodded to the other Covenant on board.

"Wellâ€|" 16807 Remorseful Incentive began nervously but stopped as the Phantom abruptly began to shake vigorously. The rumbling of impact on the Phantom threw everyone but the Hunters off their feet.

"What was that?" Lib asked cocking his head in all directions.

"I believe we're under attack. Betronus, go to the cockpit andâ€|" Alei began but was cut off by Baxter. "NO! Nobody's doing anything until the light bulb talks!"

"You crazy?" Kaskut asked, frightened at the scenario.

"Baxter we can find outâ€|" Alei began to speak but was once again cut off by the Sergeant.

"NO! That thing's talking now! What did Halo do? What happened to the Forerunners?"

"Theyâ€|Theyâ€|" The Phantom was pelted again by something strong and very hot and a rush of adrenaline flowed through everyone's blood. Then finally the oracle screamed "THEY DIED!"

7. Chapter 7

WARNING: I kind of went swear happy in this chapter. Hehe, hope you enjoy either way!

Chapter 7: The Honor Guards' Revenge

"WHAT THE HELL DID YOU SAY?" Roared a furious man.

"I said I'm joining the marines!" Barked back what looked like a younger version of John. He was in the kitchen of his house. There was a strange feeling of home sweet home in his heart but his initial emotion was actually hate.

"YOU IGNORANT BASTARD!" The man bellowed.

In a matter of seconds the man was in John's face and he felt something hard strike him across the face. John recognized the abstract pain he felt, his drunken father's fury.

"You've been drinking again, haven't you dad?" John asked as he looked into his dad's furious, blood shot eyes.

"So what if I have?" Growled the beast that he was now face to face with.

Hate seemed to intoxicate John's body as anger flowed through his blood and nerves. He clenched his fist and he heard his mother weeping in the other room. "Why do you care if I leave or not?" John asked.

"Because you're part of this family and your mother needs you," growled his dad through clenched teeth.

"Bull shit!" John said and he felt the same pain strike him again. He looked into his father's raging eyes and said, "If you think that I'm going to stay here and be your punching bag for the rest of your life then you're wrong."

Something struck him again and his father's words were more painful than his drunken fury, "YOU WORTHLESS BASTARD! YOU ARE NOT WORTH THE ARMY'S TIME AND YOU'D BE A SAD ASS EXCUSE FOR A MARINE!"

John unleashed all his rage to the point where his father was on the ground bleeding and quivering by his feet. He knelt down to the menacing man and whispered in his ear, "You know what dad, you're right about something. I am a bastard. You abused mom and left her before I was born, and I still don't know why till this very day. And before I go I want you to know that the happiest time of my life was when I never met you and never knew your name."

"I came back to her didn't I?" Wheezed the pathetic man.

"Freshman year. Worst year of my life," John replied softly.

John began to walk off but before he left home he stopped as he heard his father's last request, "Could you at least help your old man up?"

John turned to look at his pathetic father on the floor, his face in his own puddle of blood. John decided it was the least he could do so he got the man back on his feet; a mistake.

His father grasped him by the neck fiercely and began to choke him. John began to panic and struggled to get out of his father's grasp but he couldn't. Then with the remaining rage and energy left in his body he punched him in the stomach and smashed his skull into his father's.

His father let out a cry of defeat that sounded like the cry of an Elite. Baxter's eyes opened immediately and he found himself badly bruised on a beach similar to Zanzibar but looked more alien like. In front of him was a blue armored Elite whom Baxter apparently head butted in his sleep.

It was just a nightmare, he reminded himself, but in truth it was his past. He got to his feet and examined the situation. Behind him was a smoking, badly damaged Phantom. Scattered near the phantom was Kaskut, the Hunters, Betronus, Lib, and Alei 'Limoto.

Beyond the Phantom was a recognizable Human drop ship known as an Albatross.

He walked over to Alei's motionless body and began slapping him across the face to get him to wake up.

"Alei! ALEI! ALEI 'LIMOTO! WAKE UP YOU STUPID ELITE!" Baxter yelled.

Alei's eyes opened and his eyes met Baxter's. Baxter smiled, happy to see the Elite was alive and awake. Then at that moment Baxter felt something white-hot and agonizing pelt him in the back.

Alei watched Baxter fall in pain by another Elite's plasma rifle. He could feel the heat coming from the blue plasma that splashed against Baxter's back. The Elite began to close in on him.

The Elite's plasma rifle was pointed square at Alei's head and the Elite gave out a hearty laugh. "The Honor Guards send their regards," the Elite growled.

Alei knew at that moment the Elite would finish Alei but with lightening speed Alei whipped out his Energy Sword, gave it a crack to activate it, and in a split second his sword had impaled the other Elite. Blue blood spurted from the other Elite's chest and the alien staggered.

"Tell the honor guards they can come and kill me by themselves next time," Alei said as he retreated his sword from the Elite's chest and it toppled over.

Alei looked over at Baxter who tried desperately to get up and helped him to his feet. "Thanks," Baxter said cringing as he felt the burnt spot on his back, "But next time you send someone to their deaths you might consider telling them to go fuck themselves."

"Go fuck themselves?" Alei asked.

"Never mind, we'll work on it later," Baxter said equipping himself with his Sniper Rifle.

"Are you able to fight?" Alei questioned.

"I've felt worse," Baxter said as a vision from his nightmare flashed before his eyes.

"Then let's wake up the others and find out what's going on," Alei said.

"How long has it been Sarge?"

A group of marines were in a dark, round room below a Forerunner Relic. There were a total of four able Marines and three wounded. Most of the marines were Corporals and Privates. The highest of command was a man named Sergeant Stackers.

"Two days Corporal," Stackers said who was lying down with his back up against the wall. Stackers glimpsed around at his unarmed Marines who tried their best to tend to the wounded or tried to get some sleep.

Sleep wasn't an easy thing though when three Elites were watching you day in and day out. They were all prisoners ever since they were

taken from their crashed Albatross that lay somewhere along the beach. Stackers glared into one of the Elite's cold, emotionless eyes. He would do anything for a Battle Rifle right now or for a measly pistol.

"Sergeant could you check out Billy's wound over here? It looks pretty bad," asked a Marine.

"You've been trained in first-aid soldier, you can handle it," Stackers said in a weary manner.

"Sir, we really need you to check out his wound," the Marine said hinting his best to Stackers that the matter was vital.

Stackers glanced over at the Marine. His eyes had a great deal of hope and urgency in them. Stackers glanced back over at the Elites who continued to watch them.

The Sergeant got to his feet and walked over to the Marine.

"What the hell is it Corporal?" Stackers asked in a hushed voice.

"Billy's picking up a signal on his comm. device. It's got to be another Marine or something, but the batteries in his comm. device are running out so if we want to make contact with whoever is out there then we've got to do it fast!"

Stackers looked down at the wounded Marine whom seemed to be looking more hopeful than hurt. Stackers glanced over his shoulder and said, "Yea it looks like a pretty bad wound. I should be able to patch it up within a few seconds."

Billy and the other Marines managed to crack a smile at Stackers' playing the Elites out as idiots. Stackers took the comm. device from Billy and tried making contact with the outside signal in a hushed voice.

"Oh dear, our current situation is most unfavorable," Remorseful Incentive said examining the debris from the severely damaged Phantom in a confused manner.

"No kidding. Where's my plasma pistol?" Lib asked scavenging around the debris.

"You mean my plasma pistol?" Kaskut said waving a plasma pistol in his hand tauntingly at Lib.

Lib bared his teeth and hissed at Kaskut angrily when Baxter stepped in between the two of them, "Stop it! We need to all calm down and figure out ourâ€|" Baxter was cut off by a loud static coming from his comm. device.

"What that?" Kaskut asked.

"It'sâ€|my comm. device. There must be someone nearby," Baxter said trying to tune into the signal that was trying to reach him.

"Try to make contact with whoever it is. Perhaps whoever it is can

tell us where we are and aid our us with our current situation," Alei said as Baxter messed around with his comm. link until he got a better signal.

The static slowly turned to a hushed crackling voice and slowly became clearer.

"Thâ€|ssâ€|kerâ€|anâ€|oneâ€|erâ€|meâ€|ver?" Kalno made a confused humming sound at the crackling sound.

"Quiet it's getting clearer!" Betronus growled.

"Reâ€|eat thâ€|is Sergeantâ€|tackersâ€|anâ€|anyonâ€|hear me?"

"Hello? HELLO? This is Sergeant J. Baxter, do you read me? Hello?"

"Sergeantâ€|Baxter? I vaguelyâ€|ear you. This is Sergâ€|Stackers. Do you reâ€|me?"

"I read you Stackers. What's your position?"

"Me andâ€|arines are prisoners in some sort ofâ€|Relic like strucâ€|re. We've got seven Marines total, three wounded. There's thrâ€|Elites guarding us riâ€|now. I'm assuming therâ€|ore Covenant above us. What's your position?"

"Me and myâ€|squad crashed here. I'm guessing you're the owner of the lovely Albatross."

"Yes! Listen Baxter, your squad is close to ourâ€|osition. The structure we're in has aâ€|pillar that you can hardly miss. The pilâ€|is part of the base that the Coveâ€| are guarding. Could you and yourâ€|uad spring us free?"

"No problem. We'll be there ASAP, hang tight!" After that he heard endless static and he turned off his comm. device.

"So what's the plan human?" Betronus asked.

"May I suggest we use this?" Alei suggested. Alei was nowhere in sight but his voice came from behind the Phantom, near the Albatross. They all went to see what he was talking about.

The crimson Elite was examining a Warthog that was parked near the Albatross. It had a few dents in it and looked like it had taken a decent beating but was still in a drivable state.

"Shotgun," Baxter called as he hopped in the driver seat. Alei hopped in the back where the turret was. He recalled being in the back seat last time and doing a fairly decent job, however this turret looked strangely different.

It was not as large as the last turret and had a different shape to it. Alei found a nearby rock to test out the gun. Instead of there being a loud bang and a force that shook the vehicle the shots coming out of the turret were suppressing, rapid, and less powerful. He remembered that this was the mounted turret used against him when the humans attacked him on the beach.

"There's room for one more," Baxter noted.

Alei looked at the others, trying to decide who should take the side seat. "Lib has too much potential on the ground and the Hunters would be too large," Alei speculated. He looked at his last two choices and came to a decision, "Betronus will do. Should we ever have to bail the vehicle, Betronus would be able to drive. Kaskut, you are in charge of Ralna, Kalno, and Lib."

"Me be good leader," Kaskut said confidently.

"Shall I assist in any way?" Remorseful Incentive questioned.

"Stay with them. Do not mess anything up," Betronus warned as he climbed into the Warthog, his grenade launcher ready.

With that the Warthog took off leaving the Hunters, Lib, and the oracle all awaiting Kaskut's orders. "So, who has plan?" Kaskut asked looking around at the others for suggestions.

The Warthog rolled across the bumpy, sandy turf at high speeds. They closed in on the large, forerunner Relic where they saw many different Covenant guarding and scouting around it. Baxter closed in on the structure to give Betronus and Alei a better shot at the Covenant around the area.

Alei's whole body began to vibrate uncomfortably as he shot suppressing lines of fire at the enemy. Betronus gathered a much smaller body count with his sluggish and inaccurate Covenant grenade launcher.

The way the enemy had fallen and how slow they reacted to them indicated that their assault was taken as a surprise to the enemy. The enemy seemed confused and unaware to what was going on. Baxter wondered how long it would take them to fully react to them and continued to drive along the Relic.

"Hurgâ€|RA!" The revolting sound of Elite bones breaking followed the sound of a Hunter's battle roar. The commotion attracted a Jackal whom stood guard in a Covenant Sniping Tower. He carried with him a Particle Beam Rifle. The Jackal cocked its head and looked below to see what was going on. He watched the Hunter trample over two Jackals below and fling a Grunt into the ocean with his mighty shield. The Hunter looked up at the Jackal.

The Sniper above took aim at the Hunter's revealed weak spot and then felt something painful hit the back of its skull and was knocked out cold. Lib had went up the Sniping tower secretly while Kalno Tebo Jamu attacked below. Once Kalno distracted the other Jackal, Lib struck and stole the Sniper.

"Your job here is done. Go join your brother now," Lib ordered having no more use for the Hunter.

Two immense green lights flashed brightly near rock formations off the East side of the Relic. A Grunt flew through mid air having been hit by Ralna Tebo Laku's fuel rod cannon and orange blood spurted from Ralna. Ralna merely grunted in pain having being hit by the other Grunt's fuel rod cannon.

Once it was safe to come out from hiding behind the large Hunter, Kaskut scurried to the place where the other Grunt had been and picked up its Fuel Rod Cannon with joy.

"Me got big boom stick!" Kaskut squealed.

Kaskut turned towards the Relic, found multiple enemies, and shot multiple green globs towards them. The green plasma like projectile exploded on contact in a messy green massacre. Ralna followed Kaskut's aggressive action and fired off a green beam of energy at the enemy as well.

Kalno joined the two of them momentarily and the three of them turned into a menacing fuel rod platoon as they wiped out all weak and inferior Covenant that tried to counter attack them.

The Warthog rolled alongside various rock formations blocking off a small cliff that lead to the coastline. Covenant opposition was weak and scattered but had slowly become more threatening to the hog.

After examining Betronus' impressive shooting Baxter had to know what weapon he'd be using, "What kind of gun is that?"

"It's called a Brute shot. Specialized Covenant weapon _only _for Brutes. Why are you interested in it's power human?" Betronus replied feeling a small bit of pride knowing Baxter was interested in his mighty grenade launcher.

Betronus was not the only Brute using the Brute shot, for something hit the back of the Warthog hard and exploded causing Alei to fly from the back of the Warthog and his momentum kept him rolling painfully down the cliff into the sandy coastline. The familiar feeling of his head being covered with rough, irritating sand reminded him of the time he was attacked at Zanzibar by the vile humans. He shook his head in displeasure as he began to curse in his native tongue.

His luck however immediately changed as he found a large familiar human weapon lying next to a dead human. The dreaded Rocket Launcher. He discarded his carbine and heaved the large weapon over his shoulder. He bowed in gratitude to the dead marine, "Your death shall not go unpunished, human."

Baxter slammed his foot against the brake once he realized Alei was no longer manning the turret. In the distance he heard the other Brute cry in agony as Betronus' Brute shot pelted the hairy Covenant in vengeance. Baxter hopped out of the Warthog and looked around to try and find where Alei was.

His concern for his alien friend immediately came to a halt as something green whizzed by his head. He ducked behind the Warthog and glanced quickly to see what it was. In the distance, on top of the Relic structure were four Elites with Covenant Carbines. He took out his Sniper Rifle, loaded it, and peeked out from the side of the hog.

With speed and precision he knocked off one by one the group of Elites. Betronus accompanied Baxter behind the vehicle as he began reloading his favorite weapon as well.

Once both the Sergeant and the Brute had finished loading their weapons they heard a ominous hissing behind them. Both turned to see a blue and white fizzing sphere like object behind the warthog. Both immediately dove forward as the fizzing grenade exploded and sent the warthog flipping through the air and over the cliff.

It landed perfectly on its wheels looking battered and charred from the plasma grenade's blast. Plasma soared at their position as a group of Grunts and a few blue Elites evaded on their position.

The enemy's heated assault was cut off as a familiar Elite entered the fray in glory. Alie 'Limoto stood proudly in front of John and Betronus with the mighty jackhammer. He fired one then two rockets at the enemy. Grunts and Elites were airborne from the explosion.

"You're starting to like those aren't you?" Baxter asked recalling Alei using the Rocket Launcher against the Pelican he was in on Earth.

"I admit, some of your weapons are effective," Alei replied as he put away the Rocket Launcher and took out his energy sword, "But I prefer the Covenant Blade."

Kaskut unloaded his Fuel Rod Cannon on another patch of Covenant opposition and quickly reloaded. Even without the Hunters' protection (whom had went up a ramp to fight the enemy at a better position), he did not fear fighting alone or reloading. Lib proved to be remarkable cover fire for Kaskut. He hadn't taken any hits yet because of Lib's sharp shooting.

Kaskut quickly reloaded and watched the Hunter trample over Covenant opposition on top of the Relic. He noticed however two green Grunts coming from the pillar point of the Relic, mounting plasma cannons. Kaskut took aim and fired a load at them, sending them into oblivion.

After barking and dancing in victory he noticed a tunnel leading to some sort of chamber inside the north part of the Relic. He headed into the chamber and found three Elites guarding a group of unarmed humans. Kaskut figured the humans were those that Baxter was talking to on his communication device and knew that this would be his time to be a hero.

"FREEZE!" Barked Kaskut, whose large cannon was aimed directly at the Elites. The Elites turned towards the puny yet threatening Grunt. "Drop your weapons or you going to get it!" Kaskut warned.

The Elites stood exactly where they were, as they feared the wrath of the Fuel Rod Cannon. Kaskut decided to end the confrontation right then and pulled the trigger. The petite Grunt was disappointed when he saw no green blob of plasma spurt out from the Fuel Rod Cannon. He pulled the trigger some more desperate for it to fire off. Nothing.

The Grunt quivered as the Elite's laughed hysterically at the puny Grunt's gun backfiring on it the moment it was to be feared. They all pulled out their energy swords and slowly closed in on Kaskut.

The puny Grunt trembled more than it ever had in its entire life for this was the end. But when all seemed doomed there was two loud, deafening shots and the sickening noise of an energy sword slicing through its victim. The Grunt stopped trembling as he saw the three Elites fall to the ground, dead. In their wake was Baxter and Alei.

"Me glad to see you guys!" Squeaked Kaskut.

"You had a Fuel Rod Cannon?" Alei said amazed at what Kaskut had found.

"Why didn't you use it against them?" Baxter questioned.

"It run out of ammo," Kaskut said simply, discarding the large cannon.

Stackers, and the other three able Marines collected the dead Elites' weapons, Alei handed over his rocket launcher to one of the Marines whom lucked out on getting pick at the weapons.

Stackers and the other Marines found the scenario awkward that they were getting help from a Grunt and Elite. They shot odd looks at the two other Covenant whom accompanied Baxter. Baxter took note of their confusion and said reassuringly, "Don't worry, they're on our side."

"Hell, as long as they're shooting at the people who're shooting us," Stackers said with a shrug. Joining the group of Marines and Baxter's squad was a humming, floating sphere.

"You even got your own floating light bulb? Now I've seen everything," Stackers said amused by the monitor.

"More reclaimers? How exciting! I wish to meet all of your acquaintances but there is another issue at hand," rambled Remorseful Incentive, "Our two walking tank friends have been successful in wiping out the enemy with the help of the Jackal and the large primate. However reinforcements have arrived outside by a Covenant drop ship. I suggest you go outside and take immediate action to the new come opposition."

"Let's hope this is the last of them. I grow tired of our persistent target," Alei growled.

"My men can help if you'd like," Stackers suggested.

"Appreciated but me, Alei, and the rest of us can handle them. Instead I want you four to patch up and aid your wounded, and if you've got time, try to get a Pelican here on the double," Baxter replied.

Kaskut, Alei 'Limoto, Sergeant John Baxter, and 16807 headed back outside, met the Hunters on top of the Relic base and watched the Phantom slowly come to a stop near the Relic and began pelting them all with the Phantom's plasma turrets.

"Ralna, Kalno, concentrate fire on the turrets. Everyone else take defensive position by the rocks," Alei ordered.

While the Hunter brothers charged up their Fuel Rod Cannons the rest of them headed down to the rocks for a defensive position. Green beams of energy hit the Phantom with immense power while the purple like plasma bursts from the Phantom splashed against the Hunters' powerful armor. Occasional orange blood spurted from the openings in the armor but they didn't seem to mind the plasma that much.

Baxter readied his Sniper Rifle and Alei gripped on tight to his sword. Covenant troops came hovering down the gravity lift of the Phantom and immediately fired upon the rocks. Baxter had taken out four Covenant troops as they came down the gravity lift. He went to grab for some more ammo to reload but he came to the shocking reality that he was out of Sniper Rifle rounds.

Baxter swore under his breath as he switched to his SMG. While Baxter became familiar with his SMG once more, Alei lobbed a plasma grenade through the air and it stuck an Elite right in the chest. It gave a final howl of demise and exploded in a blue frenzy; killing a Jackal and two Grunts who were near the Elite.

The enemy kept on coming out of the Phantom and charged at the rocks. Lib had been a nice contributor to the fight as he supported a good sniping vantage from the Covenant Sniping Tower. Alei charged at the oncoming enemy while taking cover by anything he could after striking with his mighty sword.

Baxter began giving suppressive fire to a white Elite but its shield proved to be remarkably strong. He quickly dove behind the rocks as the white Elite returned with plasma fire at him. Kaskut too was hiding, now holding a puny plasma pistol.

Baxter examined the puny Covenant weapon and remembered something about the plasma pistol's power. While the plasma pistol hardly packed a punch, when it was overcharged it had the capability of taking out a energy shield with ease. "Kaskut I need your help," Baxter said.

Kaskut looked up at Baxter hopefully, "Me? Be help?"

"Yes. I need you overcharge your plasma pistol and take out the nearest Elite's shield, got it?" Kaskut nodded and the both of them jumped out from hiding, the white Elite charging on their position.

In a matter of seconds Kaskut's plasma pistol was pulsating a bright green light. Kaskut released the trigger and the green plasma splashed against and took out the Elite's shielding device. Baxter took aim and fired a sustained burst into the Elite's chest taking it down with ease.

"An Interesting combination," Baxter said pleased by the results.

Then, totally unexpected to Baxter, Kaskut climbed up Baxter's leg, up his back, and swung his arm around Baxter's neck. While ensuring his latch onto Baxter's back with his one arm, he raised his plasma pistol over Baxter's shoulder, ready to fire at the enemy.

"What are you doing?" Baxter asked feeling a bit awkward that Kaskut was riding on his back.

"Me be sidekick! I take out shield, you do rest!" Squeaked the Grunt.

Baxter chuckled at the Grunt's idea but didn't mind having the alien on his back. Who wouldn't want a cute little Grunt on their back as cover fire, he thought.

He proceeded, taking out multiple Elites with the effective combo of an overcharging plasma pistol, followed by a sustained burst from his SMG. The two of them however were met with a challenge of a squad of Jackals charging at them from the front.

Baxter back peddled the best he could while giving off suppressive yet ineffective fire with his SMG. Baxter took a few hits of plasma in the leg, shoulder, and abdomen.

Just as the Jackals thought they had Baxter and Kaskut where they wanted them they were all flattened as Ralna and Kalno came crashing down on the squad of Jackals, from atop of the Relic base. The two Hunters roared in victory but their victory celebration was cut off as the Phantom unloaded the last of its troops.

As they began to charge at Baxter, the Hunters, and Alei, their attack was foiled as Betronus came speeding through with the Warthog, splattering a number of Covenant. Lib and Alei cleaned up the rest of them.

With nowhere else to go and nothing else to do the Phantom cowardly flew off. Alei, the Hunters, and Betronus roared in victory while Lib and Kaskut went over to join them in their moments of celebrating. Baxter couldn't help to smile feeling pride in their victory as well. While Baxter's alien friends celebrated Stackers and his men came out to meet Baxter.

"I told you we could handle it," Baxter said still smiling.

"Never doubted you Baxter," Stackers said urging a smile as well, "By the way we managed to reach another platoon of Marines on our comm. links. We've been reassigned, and by we I mean my able men and yours as well."

"Let's here it," Baxter said interested in what he'd be assigned to.

"A large platoon of Marines are escorting Captain Miranda Keyes to some place called the Library. She's looking for something called the Index, and she could use all the help she can get. Three Pelicans are on their way as we speak. One will be used to distribute ammunition to us and pick up our wounded, the other two are going to be used for our transportation to Miranda's position."

"Sounds easy enough," Baxter replied with a shrug.

"If you think racing a platoon of Covenant, fighting off Sentinels, and protecting your own ass from the Flood is easy," Stackers said, shaking his head and walking off, disbelieving Baxter's confidence now.

Baxter stared blankly out into the tranquil ocean that surrounded the

Relic.

"The flood?"

He'd never had experience against this enemy but he heard horrific stories about them. He prayed they'd be nothing different from the Covenant.

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8: The Nightmare Returns

"Do you mind going over our mission again?" Alei asked, examining his Carbine thoroughly.

Alei, Baxter, and Kaskut, accompanied by some other Marines were sitting restlessly inside a Pelican. In the Pelican that trailed behind them there was Betronus, Lib, the monitor, Sergeant Stackers, and some other Marines.

"Alright," Baxter said taking in a deep breath to explain the mission again, "Miranda Keyes is leading an operation to retrieve something called the index. This index supposedly is the key to activating this Halo. If we get this index, your Prophets won't be able to activate Halo and we'll all still be alive. Now this index is heavily guarded by machines called Sentinels. These Sentinels will do whatever it takes to stop us from getting this icon, and to add onto that we're positive the Covenant will be on our backs, racing for the index as well. So far it sounds like we've got a head start, however these Sentinels and your Covenant friends aren't the only things we'll encounter."

"The Flood as well?" Alei asked in horror.

"Yes. To get to the icon we'll need to push through the Sentinel forces and in doing so we'll be threatened by the Flood. Have you ever dealt with them before?"

Frightening and disturbing images flashed through Alei's mind of his past experience and conflicts with the Flood. He shuddered at the memories that resided inside his mind and shook away the pain he felt. "Yes I have unfortunately."

"Good, then you'll know what to expect from them, as for me, I'm clueless to how they fight. Any way's, while proceeding through Flood infested grounds and pushing through Sentinel forces we'll be heading as a group to our destination. The name of the game is to protect the convoy of Marines that will be defending Miranda. We have countless amounts of Marines on this mission so defeat is not an option. Do whatever you can to keep Miranda alive, stick together, and try your best to defend the other Marines as well, and most importantly keep up. Once the Flood attack, it's going to be hell. Any questions?"

"Yes one," Alei said as he felt the Pelican nervously shake and rock, "Are Kalno Tebo and Ralna Tebo going to be alright?"

Baxter gave out a chuckle at Alei's concern as the Pelican rocked some more. Alei had refused to leave the Tebo Hunter brothers behind

at the Relic, and Baxter had come up with a solution. On the tail of the Pelican, where vehicles or ammunition pods were carried, was where the Hunters clung to the ship.

Their giant shields had been strapped tight to tail of the Pelican while their bodies dangled as the Pelican soared through the winds. Not only was this the most efficient way to travel with the Hunters, but it provided the Pelican with much supporting fire as the Hunters were still able to use their Fuel Rod Cannon arms to attack any opposition of the Pelican.

"Don't worry about them Alei, they'll be fine," Baxter reassured.

"And what about us? Are you sure this vehicle can support both their weight?" Alei questioned, skeptical of Baxter's plan.

"Alei, this bird can hold one of our tanks easily along with a squad of Marines. I'm pretty sure it can support your two buddies," Baxter said resting his head against the Pelican.

Alei activated his comm. link and tuned into the two Hunters to check up on them, "How are you two doing?"

The Hunters gave out a eerie frightened moan of sickness. He suspected the Hunters would be feeling nauseous, but by the looks of it the flight would be ending soon.

The two Pelicans began to slow down and the sound of gun fire echoed through the air. Alei peered out from where he was in the Pelican to see hundreds of marines planted into the quarantine zone below. They were fighting off the floating wonders, the Sentinels. The smaller ones seemed to be easy cannon fodder against the humans however the larger ones, Sentinel Enforcers, were more of a challenge and managed a decent body count.

Below were two human vehicles, a goliath tank and the trusty Warthog. Alei remembered that the second Pelican was carrying an additional Warthog for the extra support. He was amazed to see how determined the humans were for this operation.

As the two Pelicans came to a halt and hovered above the battlegrounds, Alei watched the humans suffer against two Sentinel Enforcers. The Scorpion Tank and Warthog were avoiding the machines at all costs but the humans willingly and desperately fought off the monstrosity machines.

Just when he felt that the humans had little to no hope of defeating them quick enough he felt the Pelican rock and saw two large green beams shoot at the Enforcers. The green beams hit them in their unguarded region where their shields had no protection from the heavy assault. One green beam made a critical hit and the one Enforcer came crashing down. The other turned towards the Pelican and began firing upon it, its last mistake. The humans took advantage of its back turned and easily finished it off.

With both Enforcers down the Pelicans were able to land safely and the Warthog was dispatched, and the troops gathered with the others. The other Marines' first reaction to the Hunters and other Covenant on board the Pelicans was a shock and confusion, though they quickly

adjusted to them and came to the conclusion that they were an ally, not an enemy. Alei stuck close to Baxter, feeling lost and alone amongst the huge amounts of Marines. Kaskut jumped on Baxter's back not wanting to have to walk excruciating miles through the snowy region.

It was a gloomy, dark region where there was a faint snow fall. The wind's eerie whispers made everyone uneasy and on their toes, wondering when they might find their greatest nightmare. Alei, Baxter, and Kaskut now joined up with Lib, Betronus, and the Tebo brothers. They were near the center, where a large Scorpion was and a female human sat on top of it. The female sitting on top the Scorpion motioned for Baxter. Alei and the rest of the Covenant followed Baxter, feeling lost without him.

"Good to see you Sergeant. Mind telling me who your friends are?" Miranda asked.

Baxter turned to his Covenant friends behind him and said, "They're all trust worthy and all skilled. Alei, the Elite in red is the first I met, everyone else is under his command." Alei bowed slightly to Miranda as a symbol of peace and greetings.

"The more firepower the better", Miranda admitted, "Just make sure they don't friendly fire. Alright Sergeant?" Before Baxter could acknowledge, the sinister humming and whirring of Sentinels echoed through the quarantine zone.

"Clear out those Sentinels!" Ordered Miranda, her voice echoing through the quarantine zone. The marines and squad of Covenant fired instantly on command at the new threat. They went down gracefully by the large amount of gunfire, until the Enforcers entered the fray. The Scorpion's main cannon turned toward the Enforcer and fired suppressing machine gun fire and delivered an awesome blow to the Enforcer's frontal shield. The shields disappeared and the Hunters sandwiched the enforcer from the front and back with their deadly Fuel Rod Cannons.

"Nice work, now let's go! We can't waste any time," Miranda said to her massive squad, "I want one Warthog leading the squad ahead and another Warthog tailing behind. All troops assume a circular formation around the tank."

They all obeyed command with haste and proceeded towards an object marking a wall that opened by proximity. They were shudder like doors which lead into a large dimly lit hallway. The Warthogs rolled at slow speeds to keep with the Scorpion and the other Marines.

Alei and many others found the hallway eerie as noises creaked and groaned at the walls of the tunnel. There was an odd odor that few recognized before. It struck Alei's senses hard and he felt a chill go up his spine. As they continued to proceed there was a sudden bone chilling scream that came from the rear of the squad.

"AHHH! SOMEBODY HELP! AHHHHHHHHH!" Screamed a Marine in hysteria. Everyone turned toward the Marine and tried desperately to help him with something latched onto his leg then there was another sudden cry of madness, and another. Soon more Marines began to panic and many began to fire.

Alei searched around looking for the nightmare he assumed had closed in on the squad. He saw something skitter before him and he began engaging. Yellow and white fluids popped from whatever it was and more skittered. Alei kept firing off his Carbine at the crawling enemy, killing as many as possible.

Another patch of them came about, firing echoed off the walls of the tunnel. The sound of Marine's dieing and zombie like screams filled the tunnel. It turned into utter chaos, the tunnel was now a giant trap. Baxter began firing sustaining shots with his SMG at the squirming creatures, and Kaskut fired his pistol occasionally in fear of the enemy. Betronus was not resorting to weapons however, feeling overconfident to use them, and began using his giant fists and feet to exterminate the parasites. Lib was cowering near the tank with his shield next to the monitor.

"Oh dear, the parasite are present, this is most unpleasant," Remorseful Incentive chimed.

Alei found his Carbine was a poor choice against the new enemy and immediately switched to his sword and heard Miranda call out something, "Everyone proceed and—"

Alei 'Limoto did not hear the rest of what the female human was saying because there was a immense piercing pain that struck the back of his head. He was immobilized by pain and blacked out and a vision appeared before his eyes.

"Ale! " Alei 'Limoto immediately snapped out of a trance he was in, pondering about the humans. He saw it was his father who'd call his name.

"Yes father?" Alei asked.

His father wore noble, white armor showing much power and authority in his armor. Alei wore standard blue armor, the most basic armor used for mediocre ranked Elites. Alei had recently a few weeks ago sworn into the Covenant along with his other brothers who stood among him; Ebak, Palo, and Nifa. His other brothers too wore blue armor like him and were on the same mission as he was.

They were all standing on a Covenant ship used for research purposes, they were the vigilant guards of the ship. His father formed a smile at his youngest son with his mandibles, proud to see him in the Covenant, "You should be prepared, Alei. We are carrying out a very important mission for the Prophets and your mind seems distracted. One false error could cause failure."

"I'm sorry father. Next time I shall be more alert and aware to my objectives," Alei apologized, hanging his head in disappointment. Alei always seemed to day dream and ponder the most among his brothers. His thoughts mostly on mysteries that the Prophets refused to explain like the Great Journey, the Forerunners, and the Humans.

"It is all right my son. I know this mission may seem tiring at the moment but I must remind you that it is extremely important and extremely risky," his father reminded them.

"Father," Palo, the second oldest and wisest of the brothers said,

"Why exactly are we doing this again? Why are we researching and delivering these worthless parasites?"

"Questioning the Prophets is a risky matter Palo, though I respect your thirst for knowledge," their father replied, "I know what the Prophets intend with this mission. They wish to understand these creatures as the Forerunners have. The Flood is mysterious and dangerous. Should we find out more about them we may fight and survive against their power, perhaps even use their power. Our mission is to secure this ship that contains this parasite, and protect it so that the others may research."

"Why do we not simply wipe out the entire Vermin? The Covenant can crush these parasites easily, and I thirst for victory!" Cried out the eldest, most blood thirsty of the brothers, Ebak.

"Not all victories can be accomplished by means of power, Ebak. We must protect this ship, it is our duty given to us by the wise Prophets," His father replied simply.

"But who would want to attack or interfere with us?" Questioned the second youngest, and most loyal to the Covenant, Nifa.

"The Humans. Their intentions or plans are unknown to us. I also suspect that the Prophets are worried of some sort of rebellion in the future and that friendly fire may be an issue."

The mention of the humans made Alei's mind race more about the mysterious race and he had to ask the question that had floated through his mind for so long, "Why didn't the Prophets offer the humans to join the Covenant?" Everyone stared at Alei awkwardly wondering what he had just said. Alei felt a lump in his throat but was not ready to discard his question yet, "The Humans could be misunderstood for all we know. Why didn't we offer them a place in the Covenant?"

Before anyone could speak an alarm sounded off and the ship shook. "WE HAVE A FLOOD BREACH! EVERYONE ASSUME EXTERMINATION AND STERALIZATION ACTIONS!" Yelled an Elite's voice over the PA.

The family of Elites readied their plasma rifles and their father led them through the ship to the research area where the Flood breach would be.

"Be diligent my sons and stay together. We shall overcome this conflict," their father reassured as he opened the door leading to the heart of the research station. They headed inside the dimly lit room where plasma fire came from all ends of the area.

Alei's nervousness must have been obvious because his brother, Ebak, turned to reassure him, "Don't worry Alei, we will overcome this and soon we may have the chance to be shipped off to Halo so that we may fight the true enemy, side by side." His confident, warrior born brother's words calmed Alei a bit but still found the sickness of going against an unknown, parasitic enemy.

Dozens and dozens of yellowish, whitish blobs with tentacles scurried across the surface of the floor searching for its victims. Alei's father was the first to fire at the parasites, leading his brood into combat as well. The burning plasma obliterated the Flood easily but

the more the Elites fought, the more determined the Vermin became.

They all proceeded in further into the research facility where dozens and dozens of the parasites had resigned and swarmed. Alei saw other Elites in the research facility as well, giving their all to eliminate the threat. He then saw a pack of infection forms swarm towards him, hungry for his fresh flesh. Alei back peddled and started firing but his plasma fire was only good enough to wipe out half of the pack once his gun overheated. As they closed in more, Ebak shot furiously to wipe out the rest of the enemy that engaged his brother. Alei gave a curt nod to his brother as thanks and they continued to fight.

Alei moved over towards his father's position, who now had two plasma rifles in hand and seemed to be the most violent and skilled warrior in the room. Alei helped his father wipe out another swarm of parasites easily and then turned to see his brother, Nifa, struggling to destroy a pack towards him. Alei immediately assisted him and the two wiped out the parasites.

Then there was an agonizing, horrific scream that echoed through the chaotic room. Alei, the only one of his family whom wasn't dealing with a swarm of Flood at the moment, turned to see what had happened. He saw one of the infection forms latched onto the back of another Elite's head. The Elite desperately tried to get the infection off its head, with another Elite desperately trying to help it as well.

The Flood grew hungrier and their hunger made them even more persistent and powerful. His father activated his comm. device to reach the other parts of the ship and shouted, "WE NEED MORE ASSISTANCE!"

Alei knew, and assumed his father knew as well, the ship didn't have many Elites on board. The prophets had sent a small amount of Elites to carry out this task, and there were only a few left that could assist, those being the pilots.

In a matter of minutes, Gold Elites now appeared in the scene, with magnificent, glowing Energy Swords in hand. They tore through the Flood like they were nothing, but the Flood seemed to sense the amount of power the Gold Elites had, and targeted them more. He watched the Gold Elites tear through the Flood as more of them swarmed towards them. The Gold Elites were persistent, but so were the Flood, and the Flood was hungry. The Gold Elites soon seemed overworked and more stressed as they fought now that the Flood was literally flooding on their position.

The Gold Elites soon showed weakness and weariness in their battle and then a large swarm of Flood leapt and showered the Gold Elites with a magnificent attack, completely overwhelming them. Alei could barely make out the Gold Elites now that they were covered by the infection forms, and then he saw another swarm of Flood coming towards him.

Blue plasma splashed the hungry parasites and they began popping from Alei's suppressive fire. The once mildly tranquil research facility was now a living hell as more hideous cries of Elites echoed in the room, and the enemy was uncontrollable. He saw flashes of Elites

slowly being engulfed by the parasites and transforming into the spawn of hell. Alei backpedaled nervously from the terrifying scenes he witnessed and then the worst had finally come.

Then the Infection forms began swarming on his family. Palo had an infection form planted on his skull, Nifa had one scraping its tentacles into his back, Ebak was struggling to get one off his shoulder. The worst was seeing his dad's misery; a infection form dug its sharp tentacles into his chest and his blue blood began to spray from his chest in a messy manner. His father's face was horrifying and seeing him in pain nearly killed Alei. His painful looking eyes stared into Alei's.

"Aleia!" His father groaned as the infection drove deeper into his chest. His father was in too much pain to speak anymore and Alei didn't know what his father wanted him to do. Did he want him to stay here and fight of the rest like his family, assist him by trying his best to get rid of the infection form that tried desperately to infect his father, or save his own skin since dieing here like this wasn't worth it.

Alei didn't know exactly how to read his father's thoughts at that chaotic, nightmarish moment but Alei's instinct of survival told him to leave. Alei ran towards the door leading to his escape and sealed it behind him. He panted heavily and the hellish images flashed before his eyes at lightning speeds again and he was no longer the young, cowardice Elite anymore.

Alei let out a final cry and all the pain had gone away and he was back in the tunnel where the large amount of Marines fought to survive and to protect Miranda.

He rubbed the back of his head. He felt a slight trickle of blood drip from a small yet precise hole in the back of his head. He figured it wasn't that serious and the miracle was that the Vermin was off of him.

He turned to see Baxter grabbing the Flood infection squirming around desperately in his hand. It popped after a few seconds and Baxter smiled seeing his Alien friend was alright.

"Once again, I am in debt to you," Alei said giving Baxter a curt bow and they returned to their fight on repelling the Flood.

End
file.